WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Founded December 17, 1857 SEPTEMBER 1979

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

ART FAIR ACTIVITIES RAISE $2,100 FOR WCHS

Thanks to the donation of space by Great Lakes Federal Savings and member help WCHS was able to boost its income by a tidy $2,163.97 during the Art Fair July 25-28.

Assisting chairperson Carol Freeman with the WCHS Art Fair Booth were Betty Arndt, John Bean, David Braun, Mrs. Howard Bjork, Flora Burt, Mary and George Campbell, Reva Cranor, April Connell, Lois Foyle, Glen Freeman, Frances Gamble, Harold Jones, Edna Koch, Tom and Harriet Lacy, Mary and Dan Lirones, Ethelyn Morton, and Clifford Murphy.

Others are Connie Osler, Dorothy Ouradnik, Sherry Powers, Hazel Proctor, Jewel Reynolds, Dorothy Reiff, Helen Schmutz, Wystan and Catherine Stevens, Wilma Steketee, Millicent Willits and Alice and Lawrence Ziegler. (Girl Scouts also helped. See separate article.)

Herb Pfabe was parking chairman. Helpers included Sam Breck, Jeanine DeLay, Bob Gamble, Dave Pollock, John Proctor, Sam Sturgis and Lawrence Ziegler.

FALL FESTIVAL PLANNED AT COBBLESTONE FARM

Cobblestone Farm's fall festival is scheduled from 12 to 5 p.m. Sunday, September 23, at the farm on Packard Road. Rain date is September 30.

There will be demonstrations of making butter, corn husk dolls and quilting. The house will be open and the Cobblestone Country Dancers, directed by David Park Williams, will perform. Cider, doughnuts, popcorn and some antiques and collectibles will be on sale.

The Pearl K. McGowan Rug Hook Crafters made another "cat's paw" rug like the one they presented to the farm last year to be raffled that day.

WCHS ELECTS OFFICERS; ANDERSON, DANN TO HEAD SOCIETY IN 1979-80

Leigh C. Anderson, University professor-emeritus, was re-elected president of Washtenaw County Historical Society at the annual meeting held Saturday, June 9, at Barton Dam Powerhouse. John C. Dann, director of the University of Michigan's Clements Library, was named vice-president.

Continuing in their respective posts are Pat Austin, treasurer; Ethelyn Morton, corresponding secretary; and Alice Ziegler, recording secretary. Elected to the board were Herbert Bartlett of Saline, Harold Jones of Chelsea and Wilma Steketee of Ann Arbor. Named directors at large were Douglas Crary and Thomas Lacy, both of Ann Arbor, and Warren Hale, Milan.

A unanimous ballot was cast for the slate submitted by the nominating committee, composed of David Pollock, chairman, Hazel Proctor, and Herbert Pfabe.

President Anderson gave a brief combined report of WCHS activities and programs for the previous year during which the Society restored and repaired the Powerhouse to where it was weathertight and started to seek funds to build a proposed addition to the powerhouse.

A surprise presentation was made to Alice Ziegler for contributions to WCHS as editor of the *Washtenaw Impressions*. The certificate, signed by board members was enclosed in a walnut frame made and finished by President Anderson who makes woodworking almost a full-time hobby.

'WHAT IS IT?' ANSWER

The item pictured on page 8 of the May issue was a tummy reducer. At least that was what it was supposed to do when you rubbed it over your tummy or other parts.

WAR STORIES OF 1776 TOLD BY COMMON SOLDIER TO BE SEPTEMBER TOPIC

American Revolutionary soldiers applying for government pensions were required to prove their service. Their stories are the basis of a new book of which WCHS will get a preview by the author at 8 p.m. Thursday, September 27, in Liberty Hall.

John C. Dann, director of Clements Library at the U-M and WCHS vice-president, will speak on "The American Revolution: Reminiscences of the Common Soldier." The talk is based on his book, *The Revolution Remembered* to be published by the University of Chicago in April next year. *American Heritage* will publish excerpts in its April edition.

Dr. Dann will announce speakers for upcoming meetings at that time.

WCHS FUNDS GROW $236 FROM ANNUAL PLANT SALE.

A total of $236.90 was realized from the annual Katherine Groomes Memorial Plant Sale, September 13 and 14, Carol Freeman, chairman, reported.

Contributors included Chelsea Florist and Neilsen's, Florence Armbruster, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Bidlack, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Dobson, Mrs. George Harms, Dr. L.Dell Henry, and Mary Steere.

Others who worked or contributed or both were Leigh Anderson, Reeva Cranor, George Campbell, Marion Davis, Glen Freeman, Ethelyn Morton, Eleanor Ostafin, Edith Pelz, Janet Rocco, Helen Schmutz, Lois Sutherland, Martha Wilson, and Alice Zeigler.

Thanks also to Great Lakes Federal and anyone who dropped off plants and didn't leave their name.

IF YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK

OLD HOMES GIVE AWAY THEIR AGE

Older homes give away their age in several ways according to a panel of experts who discussed "Dating the Older Home" as part of the Ann Arbor Historic District Commission's series on preservation last spring.

Three main approaches to sleuthing out such information involve exterior style, public records and construction techniques, they said. (WCHS designated this program as its May meeting.)

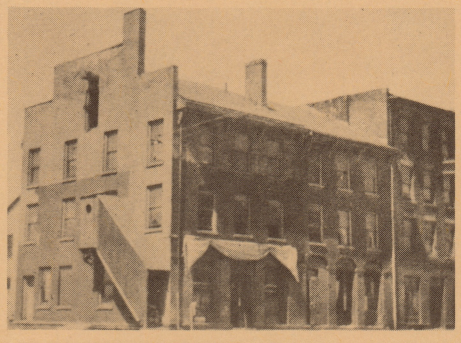
Panelists were Bret Waller, director of the U-M Museum of Art, moderator; Peter Schmitt of Western Michigan University archives at Kalamazoo; Susan Wineberg who has been researching homes in the Division Street Historic District; and Richard Neumann, an architect and AAHDC member.

Wystan Stevens, local historian, led off with a slide tour of local structures dating from the 1830s to 1920s. His presentation illustrated that architectural style can be used to approximate the age of a structure to within 20-25 years, the usual period of popularity of a given style.

Schmitt explained how approximate dates can be deduced from old city directories, property tax assessment rolls or other public records. Ms. Wineberg discussed use of city directories and birdseye views, while Neumann pointed out technological changes in construction can suggest when a house was built.

"As far as we know the oldest building left in Ann Arbor is the Anson Brown building in Lower Town built in 1832 at 1001 Broadway, now housing the St. Vincent de Paul Store," Stevens said. The Brown building with its Dutch step gable ends is similar to many buildings in upstate New York.

Greek or Classical Revival was the dominant style from 1830-1860. The George Corselius house,



OLDEST BUILDING – 1832
Built by Anson Brown who had high hopes for Lower Town.

317 East Ann Street, across from City Hall, dates from the 1830's. "Professor Kingsbury Marzolf of the U-M College of Architecture describes the style as Federal Survival, a phase of Classical Revival. Standard Greek Revival has the entrance door on the pediment or triangular end facing the street. Here the side faces the street with the doorway centered and a stairway right behind it leading to the upper story."

Also built in the 1830's in Lower Town was the home occupied by Dr. Daniel E. Kellogg, the clairvoyant physician, in the 1860's and the home of the Reverend Guy Beckley, abolitionist leader and publisher of *The Signal of Liberty* newspaper, at 1425 Pontiac Street. The Kellogg home has a Classical Revival door with sidelights. The Federal Survival Beckley house was a station on the "underground railroad" which smuggled slaves to freedom in Canada.

The Orrin White house across from Huron High School on Fuller Road was erected in 1840 from cobblestones, plentifully supplied by retreating glaciers. Stones on the facade are laid in herringbone pattern.

"It is thought that Stephen Mills of New York State may have designed this house but we have no concrete evidence," Stevens continued. "We're pretty sure that Mills built the front part of the Ticknor-Campbell house on Packard now being restored as Cobblestone Farm. The stone portion was built in 1844 in front of an 1835 frame structure. The facade again is in herringbone style."

Mills is noted for several homes of adobe or unfired brick in the area, sealed with stucco. Mills's own adobe home was destroyed for the expansion of the I-94 interchange at Saline Road a few years ago.

The house at 220 North Fifth Avenue, now occupied by Restorations Unlimited, was built in 1845 as were the George Hill home at 321 East Liberty Street and the Norman B. Covert home at 1500 Dexter Avenue. Hill Street was named for George Hill. Plans for the Covert cottage were recorded in the Historic American Buildings Survey and deposited in the Library of Congress along with photographs before it was sheathed in imitation brick.

Covert who took a 16-week medical course "discovered that he became ill whenever he entered a sickroom so he became a carpenter instead."

The J. D. Baldwin home, 1530 Hill Street, built in 1848 "is a beautiful classical house but in a totally different style, not Greek Revival but more on the Roman plan. The walls are brought up flat to conceal the sloping ceiling."

The oldest surviving University structure is the president's house, 815 South University Avenue, built in 1840. The contractor is thought to have introduced to Ann Arbor the technique of brick structures, coverd with stucco, then scored to resemble large blocks of stone.

By 1846 there were a number of other buildings similarly finished and according to a local newspaper, Ann Arbor had a nickname, "the little stucco village" because of this.

The president's home is a hybrid as each succeeding president added his own patio or wing or porch. President Angell insisted as a

condition of accepting the presidency that the house be enlarged. The roof was raised, the third story added and the first flush toilet in Ann Arbor installed.

President Hatcher who came in 1951 told the historical society that the Angell era plumbing was still intact and in Hatcher's words, "the waters of my shower one morning came down before I turned it on."

The Thomas Earl house, 415 North Main Street, built 1840, "is a nice example of the so-called 'broken pediment' Greek Revival. Instead of the complete triangle of the Greek Revival, it is merely suggested by the cornice turns. The porch is probably an early twentieth century addition."

An 1840 house at 712 East Ann Street, designed by Architect Andrew DeForest, has Egyptian style exterior frames around door and windows. "The only other Ann Arbor example I know of is in Kempf house."

"One of the most famous two-story temple style houses, because it was featured in so many works on architectural history by U-M faculty members, is the Wilson-Wahr house, 126 North Division Street at Ann. It has a full pediment with fluted Ionic columns resembling the original stone ones of Greek temples."

It was built in 1843 by Robert S. Wilson who feuded publicly in a local newspaper with Sheriff William Anderson who also lived in a "Greek temple" at 2301 Packard Street built around 1846, and similar to Kempf house. The Anderson home is now part of the Genesis complex of St. Clare of Assisi Episcopal Church and Temple Beth Emeth. Kempf House built around 1850 is a little smaller in scale.

Jonathan Lund built the large square Greek Revival house at 1324 Pontiac Street in 1847. The stucco was mixed with barrels and barrels of skimmed milk which was thought to give it special adhesive qualities.

Turning to the Italianate period, generally from 1855-1880, his first example was the Wells-Babcock house, 208 North Division Street, built in 1858. Ebenezer Wells, a physician and Civil War mayor of Ann Arbor, was a brother-in-law of J. D. Baldwin who named Wells street after him.

Babcock, wiped out in the great Chicago fire of 1871, came to Ann Arbor to help his uncle, Luther James, the largest wool buyer in the state. His uncle died about 1889, leaving him $100,000 to be doubled if he married within five years. He did and he used the money to dress up the house with handtooled Italian leather with gold trim, parquet floors, marble fireplaces and the Babcock coat of arms in stained glass.

The John Gott house, 709 West Huron Street, now known as "Martha Washington house," was completed in 1861. A passerby from Chelsea admired it and copied it there—it is now the McKune Memorial Library.

Another Italianate, Tuomy house at 2117 Washtenaw Avenue, dating from the 1880's is headquarters of the Historical Society of Michigan.

The first building of dressed or cut stone was built at 1547 Washtenaw across from the big rock at Hill Street, for Henry Simmons Frieze, U-M professor of Latin. He later accepted the interim presidency of the university and went to live on campus because this house was too far out in the country.

While the Italianate "cube" has a square or rectangular floor plan, the Italian villa style features an "L" or "T" shaped plan with a square tower in an inner corner. The best example of that is the Christian Eberbach home of 1869, 1115 Woodlawn. Woodlawn was once the carriage drive to the mansion whose lawns extended to Packard Street.

QUEEN ANNE STYLE HOUSE
1890's elegance in Saline.

"There used to be quite a number of mansard roofs from the French Second Empire style but they were built too close to the University of Michigan in the 1870's and 80's." There is one at 400 South Division at William and another at 326 West Liberty, now the Oddfellows Hall. Other nice specimens are the Gilbert House and the Quirk mansion in Ypsilanti and the Davenport houses in Saline.

Orson Squire Fowler suggested the octagon was an ideal shape for a dwelling but they are not common. He also advocated using gravel in construction of the walls.

An octagon, the Alexander Winchell house, was torn down in 1913 for Hill Auditorium. There is one on Eight Mile Road near Rushton at the northern edge of the county, and two in Ypsilanti. One near Eastern Michigan University was recently moved to River Street and is used as the SOS Center. Another on South Huron, a block south of Michigan Avenue has been ruined by additions, he noted. You can still see two sides of the octagon. The stucco has given way by the left entrance, revealing the gravel wall construction.

The Gothic Revival era was 1845-1875. Examples are the Silas Douglass house, 502 East Huron, 1848, owned by the First Baptist Church, and the Dr. Alonzo Palmer house, 1867, at 205 North Division Street. The original portion of the house facing Ann Street is Italianate, built in the 1850's. After his wife died, Dr. Palmer went east and married a wealthy widow named Love Root, returned and used her fortune to build the Gothic portion.

Above the bay window on the Gothic portion is a closed blind. There's no window behind it—it's there to preserve the symmetry of the exterior. A house at Packard and South Fifth Avenue also has a blind window in the lower story, he noted.

Ypsilanti and Manchester have several examples of Gothic, some reminiscent of the Grant Wood painting, "American Gothic." A castle-style Gothic built in Manchester around 1905 was inspired by the owner's trip to England.

Queen Anne style houses were generally built from 1875-1900. They are recognized by irregular floor plans and furbelows, towers and turrets. The name is really a misnomer. They do not look like English architecture of Queen Anne's time—the early 1700's, but more like Elizabethan and Jacobean England of 1550-1625.

Examples include the David F. Allmendinger house, 1870-72, at 412 South First Street, the Ottmar Eberbach house at 402 South Fourth Avenue, 1875; the Harold Koch home at West Jefferson and Sixth Street and the Miner house, 1890, at 311 Thompson Street next to the carport. The Miner house is not typical Queen Anne but is a beautiful example of a gambrel roof.

Ann Arbor has three or four other gambrel roof houses near Ashley and West Madison Streets as a result of the contractor pouring the swimming pool in the employes recreation building at the Glazier Stove Company in Chelsea in 1906. Rather than waste all those short timbers he built the gambrel roof houses because the timbers were too short for any other kind, Stevens related.

Queen Anne houses with typical turrets include the Edward Brown house, about 1890 at the end of Cornwell place near old Saint Joseph Hospital; the Laubengayer house, 416 South Main, mid-1880's; and the Haller house next door, 1895. The only difference between the Brown and Laubengayer homes is that the latter has the only remaining carriage step in Ann Arbor attached to its porch.

Around the turn of the century there was quite an incidence of Georgian architecture characterized by certain touches including palladian windows. Bungalows came into vogue in the early twentieth century—they date locally from about 1910-25—as well as Tudor revivals. There is even a French chateau—the Hoover house on Washtenaw Avenue, formerly headquarters of Youth for Understanding before it moved to Washington, D.C.

Michigan Basement Same As Wisconsin Basement

What about the Michigan basement I hear so much about, a questioner asked the panel?

"In Wisconsin it's called a Wisconsin basement," Schmitt said.

"They tell the story about the first attorney in Kalamazoo who was going to build the biggest house in town. He couldn't hire anyone to dig his basement. There were no tools. So he started out himself with pick and shovel and everyone stood around and watched as his house got smaller and smaller!"

"As I understand a Michigan basement," Schmitt continued, "It's primarily derived from the fact that the outside walls are not sunk all the way down—it's sitting on footings about two or three feet below ground, then the cellar is dug out. If you dug it all the way to the outside wall, the outside wall would collapse. But I think it's not so much a factor of Michigan as it is of hand-dug basements. You see them in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois or wherever people were building before horse-drawn scoops were used."

Panel Moderator Bret Waller noted that photographs and information about many of the homes shown may be found in *Ann Arbor Architecture* by Les Fader and Harold Himes of the U-M architecture faculty.

Panelist Schmitt came to Kalamazoo in the 1960's and started taking slides to illustrate a course on popular art and architecture. Guessing the age from the style, he was occasionally tripped up. About 1971 the historical commission asked him to try to find out building dates of some older homes in Kalamazoo.

Asking people was not very satisfactory, he found, and he soon learned the advantages of using public records—"they give us an opportunity to look over someone's shoulder who was there at the time."

He tried first to get abstracts from owners. Failing that he went to the county register of deeds office and used the index of deeds to create his own abstract, telling selling dates and prices. The index to mortgages told when they borrowed money but seldom why. He came to rely primarily on city directories and property tax assessment rolls.

City directories in many parts of the state date back to the 1850's and 60's. Published annually or every two years, they are a real key to when a new address appears on a street.

Assessment rolls are generally available from the mid-1840's on, usually in the county assessor's office. Some are being stockpiled at the state archives in Lansing or in regional depositories.

Historically assessors were required to make annual reviews of every piece of property in April or May. The rolls include an alphabetical listing of the property owner, a legal description of the property, a dollar value and a series of taxes to be levied on it.

I learned that if you use a combination of a rise in property value and a rise in total tax, when they occurred together on a piece of property but did not occur with other properties, I felt there was a major change, he said. If the style of building fits the time of this change and any other information about the owner, then we think we have a legitimate building date. You do have to use certain correctives to make sure you are not researching a 100-year-old structure that was torn down 99 years ago.

Susan Wineberg in her efforts to date houses in the Division Street Historic District found city directories and birdseye views useful among other things. She found birdseye views to be quite accurate in their renderings of buildings. Schmitt agreed. Stevens knows of birdseye views of Ann Arbor from 1866, 1880 and 1890. Louisa Pieper pointed out that there are Washtenaw County atlases

for 1874, 1895 and 1915 showing subdivisions and property owners outside the city.

Architect Richard Neumann said there was a tremendous amount of technological change throughout the nineteenth century. If you analyze the general physical fabric of the building you can determine generally when it was built.

Foundations changed over time, he said. Earlier Greek Revival houses often were brick. Before the turn of the century they were usually stone, after 1900, concrete block. The first blocks were rusticated or cast with a textured surface to resemble stone.

"We generally expect the framing of Greek Revival houses to be hand hewn with marks of the broad axe or adz or both. After sawmills were established, they were sawed. The earlier sawmills used a band saw leaving straight up and down marks. Later circular saws left crescent marks," Neumann explained.

Iron was scarce in the colonies so a lot of buildings were put together with wooden pegs. The earliest nails were square and hand wrought but machines to cut square nails were in use in the United States by 1800. Round wire nails like those of today appeared about 1880 but there was a long transition period until 1900 when a lot of people still "swore by" square nails. Generally speaking wire nails won out although you can still buy square nails today.

Hinges had to be hand wrought until about 1830 when cast hinges became available, he said. Soon other hardware was also cast.

More sophisticated methods of analyzing buildings are possible, such as x-raying to determine type of construction but the expense would only be justified for something like Independence Hall.

1979 TOUR

HARVARD MAN FOUNDED DEXTER

His father was a Harvard man who went down from Boston to the new capital of Washington, D.C. to serve in the cabinet of President John Adams in 1800.

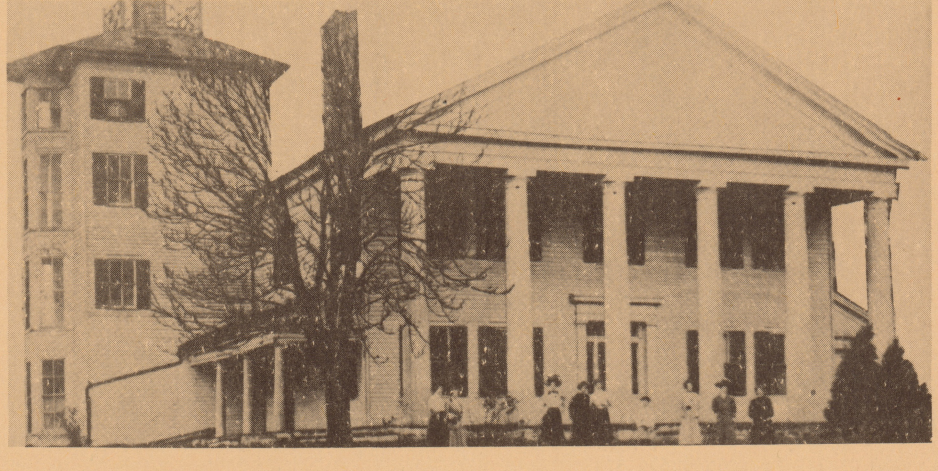
The son, also a Harvard man, chose to make his mark on the frontier. He came west and became a leader in Michigan territory. The name of both father and son was Samuel W. Dexter.

The Washtenaw County Historical Society's 1979 tour visited the Washtenaw County village he founded, then adjourned to Barton Dam Powerhouse, the site of the society's proposed museum, for dinner and the annual meeting.

A chartered city bus took tour-goers to Dexter. Tour Guide Wally Fusilier, president of the Dexter Historical Society, met the bus at the museum. Other stops were at the former Henry Gregory home, St. James Episcopal Church, the Wagner cider mill, Gordon Hall and the old *Dexter Leader* print shop.

The museum is in the former St. Andrew's Church moved about a half block from Ann Arbor Street to 3443 Inverness in 1974 to make way for the new brick structure on the original site. The wood frame museum building, still sturdy, was erected in 1883 by the German congregation.

Besides farm, school and dental office displays the museum has a number of other items and was featuring a temporary display of spinning wheels and quilts.



Photos courtesy of Great Lakes Federal Savings.

GORDON HALL – 1841-43
Judge Dexter's home, one of state's most historic, built by President Millard Fillmore's brother.

Miscellaneous items included a ballot box from Lima township, the sign from the iron bridge over the Huron River which was torn down in 1976 to make way for the new four-lane highway bridge near the cider mill and the Dexter telephone exchange used in Ann Arbor until 1974 when all electronic equipment was installed. The bridge sign says "Massillon Bridge Co., 1899, Massillon, Ohio."

Next stop was the 14-room Victorian home at 3294 Broad Street built by banker Henry C. Gregory in 1881 on part of one of the original spacious lots laid out by Judge Dexter. The home of his father, Charles S. Gregory, now housing a dentist's office, occupies the other half.

The father is described in *The Portrait and Biographical Album of Washtenaw County*, 1891, as "probably the wealthiest man in Dexter." The article also speaks highly of young Henry's accomplishments before his untimely death at 41 but fails to mention another son who was exiled to northern Michigan never to return to Dexter because he

embezzled funds from the firm.

Bruce and Doris Waggoner bought the house in 1973 for an investment but decided to restore it and make it their home.

It has the original "gingerbread" trim although previous owners covered the narrow clapboard with wider aluminum siding. Decorative molding around the windows is repeated inside and out. There is a walnut staircase and cherry wainscoting in the dining room, neither ever painted, and an original marble fireplace plus many original windows and two fake shuttered ones placed to preserve symmetry.

Bruce's restored 1917 Overland car with robin's egg blue body and black canvas top was parked by the house. The detached summer kitchen and brick smoke house in the back yard were other reminders of earlier days.

The Waggoners graciously greeted tourgoers and explained unusual items and answered questions. They have family heirlooms from both his and her family, collections of plates, cut glass, porcelain figurines, watches and other items. She has two milk painted chairs and two chairs from the old Steinbach home, now the American Legion.

There are ten-foot ceilings with handcarved molding and a black marble fireplace with original gold leaf. Nineteenth-century confirmation certificates from her family, the Wagners who run the cider mill, hang on the wall as well as framed pictures of the original owners.

One unusual item from Hong Kong is a ceramic pillow bank. The user would put his money in it and then sleep on it.

In the stone-walled basement, there is a dollhouse replica of the house made by their daughter, son-in-law and grandson. The Waggoners are in process of papering, furnishing and electrifying it.

The appearance of the 124-year-old St. James Episcopal Church building where Judge Dexter worshipped is deceptively modern with its low almost ranch-style

WAGNER CIDER MILL
Several generations have sipped cider here.

lines. In 1926 parishioners feared the church was falling down because one side was bulging out. They lowered the walls and roof, removed stained glass windows and bell tower. Only at the insistence of J. Art Lovell were the stained glass windows stored in the basement.

During the 1926 remodeling, a zinc box was found containing the manuscript of organization, dated 1830. That hangs in the church today. During the bicentennial period, the interior was restored to approximate its original appearance. Some stained glass windows were re-installed. Old iron chandeliers were repainted and trimmed in gold. Old oak pews were stripped and painted white as they had been in the early days. The ushers pews retain the original doors.

The parish bought its first log building and lot from Alonson Crossman for $450, three days after articles of incorporation were signed in 1837, the year of Michigan statehood. By 1853 Dexter was prospering and vestrymen voted to erect a new building. Judge Dexter donated the site and construction was finished in 1855. The ten percent mortgage was paid off in 1858 and the building consecrated by the first bishop of the Diocese of Michigan, the Right Reverend Samuel A. McCroskry.

In the early days pews were sold at auction to the highest bidder to help support the church. The ones that brought the highest prices were not the low numbered front pews but the ones nearest the heat registers. Early records show Judge Dexter got pew number 18 for $20.

During the late 1800's, cuspidors were provided for those who "chewed" and an occasional "ping" of tobacco juice hitting the spittoons would awaken drowsy parishioners.

Another kind of juice was the focus at the next stop where for the past 93 falls, apples have been squeezed into cider. Frederick Wagner, the operator, and his helper, Wesley Kempf, opened the old mill and welcomed visitors although it was too early to have any apples to press.

In the old days every farm had an orchard and families would bring their own apples for a barrel of cider to put down in the basement. Nowadays, students are the largest group of customers, and with increasing urbanization, Wagner has to go further and further to obtain apples.

The process is still basically the same as far as grinding and pressing, but original steam power was first replaced by a gasoline engine and now electricity. The use of sprays made washing mandatory and the remaining pulp, once dumped in the river, is now hauled to a land fill.

A bushel yields about three gallons. At peak capacity the mill can turn out 1,500 to 2,000 gallons a day. It now operates for a 90-day period in the fall.

The mill was erected on the banks of the Huron River near the bridge in July 1886 by Messrs. Tuttle and Van Ettan and a twelve horsepower steam engine used for power. The mill ran night and day the following year. It was operated by Van Ettan, William Warner and Owen McClain until 1893 when William Van Natter took over until his death in 1899. In September 1900, John Wagner reopened the mill and the Wagner family has operated it since that time. John's son Otto took over on his father's death and the present operator, Frederick, became a partner with his father in 1935.

Dexterite Don Drew recalls that children in the village could always stop for a free drink. Sometimes people would bring more apples to be pressed than their barrel would hold. The excess was put in the vat

for such free samples or sometimes to fill a barrel when people did not bring quite enough apples.

Drew recalls that boys discovered a way to use a "one-lung" gasoline engine once used to power the mill as a sort of apple cannon. The engine was controlled by a governor mechanism which instead of operating a throttle as it would today, held the exhaust valve open and prevented the ignition system from firing. The engine would fire once, then coast for several revolutions without firing. Since the exhaust valve was held open during the coasting cycle, a vacuum was created in the exhaust stack which stuck out the side of the building. Boys would stick an apple into the stack, the vacuum sucked it into the engine, and when it finally fired, the apple would shoot out the stack for a distance of over half a block.

The "one-lung" apple cannon is gone but the sweet tangy beverage most everybody likes on a crisp fall day can still be had there along with doughnuts made by the hundreds on busy fall weekends.

Next was Gordon Hall, the stately Greek Revival mansion approached from a wooded drive leading up from Dexter-Pinckney Road at Island Lake Road.

Built by Judge Dexter in 1841-43, the home was rated as one of the most historic in Michigan in 1934 by the United States Department of Interior. Detailed drawings and photographs of it were deposited in the Library of Congress at that time. In 1972 it was officially entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

Named for Judge Dexter's mother, Catherine Gordon Dexter, it was built by Calvin Fillmore, a carpenter-contractor and brother of President Millard Fillmore. It was Judge Dexter's third home in the area.

The first home was a log cabin built about 1824 in Webster township. The second built in 1826-27 was a large frame house near the cider mill. While the arrival of the railroad on July 4, 1841, was a gala day for Dexter, the scholarly judge found the noise of passing trains distracting and started the mansion.

Dexter was a man of strong principles. He used Gordon Hall as a stop on the underground railroad. He was an anti-Mason and a strict temperance man. It was ironic that his log cabin became Dexter's first tavern.

The massive front columns of Gordon Hall were skillfully fitted strips of pine. The timbers are hand-hewn white oak and floor joists are three-inch by eleven-inch hand-cut oak, anchored in place with oak pins.

There is one piece of timber fifty feet long without a knot. The house rests on oak sills. Floors are wide yellow poplar boards. Between the studs in outside walls there is solid brick, probably thought to have better insulating quality than it actually has. A hallway extended across the house and walnut-banistered staircase reached to the second floor in unbroken flight.

There were twenty-two rooms, nine with plastered fireplaces. The main square portion had four large rooms down and four up. A three-story tower wing at a back corner was later torn down.

Judge Dexter came to this area in 1824 and located near the confluence of Mill Creek with the Huron River. He erected a sawmill and grist mill on the creek near the present fire station. He became Washtenaw County's first judge and took over publication of the county's first newspaper, the better to air his anti-Masonic views, before he platted the village that bears his name in 1830.

He also is credited with locating Saginaw in 1825 and Byron in Shiawassee county and buying land in various parts of the state.

During the last twenty years of his life he preached at schoolhouses in areas "not supplied with regular means of worship." He died at his home February 6, 1863. His third wife (the first two died young) lived in the mansion until 1899. It was then sold and rented and fell into disrepair.

In 1938, Judge Dexter's granddaughter, Catherine, who had married Stanley McCormick of the International Harvester Company family, repurchased it and was restoring it (under the direction of Professor Emeritus Emil Lorch of the U-M architecture school).

In 1951, Mrs. McCormick donated the property to the University of Michigan, Professor Lorch suddenly left and the University carved four apartments out of the house. Tourgoers were allowed to go through one empty upstairs apartment.

At the final stop at 8071 Main Street tourgoers saw the old *Dexter Leader* print shop shortly before it was dismantled and donated to the Dexter Area Historical Society. Since 1956 the paper has been printed in Chelsea by Walter P. Leonard who also owns *The Chelsea Standard*.

Loren D. Estleman, staff writer in charge of *The Leader* office, showed the visitors through the crowded dimly lit shop with its old type cases, a turn-of-the-century linotype machine, and two presses—one a hand-fed Golding job press, out of an old cardboard box factory, the other a Chandler-Price job press with Kluge auto-feeder, all in working order.

DEXTER OFFICERS NAMED

Dexter Historical Society re-elected Wallace Fusilier and Earl Doletzky as president and vice-president respectively for the coming year. Heloise Dunstan will continue as recording secretary. Rose Van Aken is corresponding secretary and Anne Nuttle, treasurer.

Historical society directors are Neil Frank, Dexter township; Wana Baldus, Webster township; Jim Line, Lima; Fran Ernst, Scio; Alicia Pratt, Dexter village; and Dr. David Angus, representing the schools.

The museum board includes Sarah Frank, director; Nina Rockham, assistant director; Jim Parker, curator; Anne Nuttle, treasurer and Bene Fusilier, secretary.

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

Chelsea Historical Society—Meets 8 p.m. second Monday of month at McKune Memorial Library.

President Lois Moore has appointed five members to serve on a Chelsea Historical Commission now being formed. They are Kathleen Chapman, Otis Titus, Frances Runciman, Sally Rendell and Dr. Wilfred Lane. The village council and planning commission are also to appoint members.

Titus has already gotten the Welfare Building of the former Glazier Stove Works on the Michigan Historical Register.

Dexter Historical Society—The special display through September at the museum is of scale model airplanes and dioramas of war battles made and loaned by Dr. Leroy M. Pratt. Old Boy and Girl Scout uniforms and equipment are being gathered for an October through December special exhibit.

Author's luncheon, 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, September 26, at museum meeting room by the Heritage Guild. Local writers participating are Loren Estleman of Dexter, Robert Asprin, Lynn Abbey, Aliza Chevron and Thomas Staicar of Ann Arbor. They will discuss their writing and autograph copies of their books. Luncheon will be served on the special Bicentennial commemorative plates and each guest may take his home with him. Lorraine Govaere and Kathleen Adair are co-chairmen. Tickets are $5.50. Further information at 426-4331.

St. Joseph Catholic Church, built in 1874, has been designated a historic building by the Michigan History Division of the Department of State.

Salem Historical Society—Plymouth Schools have turned over the former one-room South Salem Stone School at North Territorial and Curtis Roads to the Society which hopes to restore it as a museum.

Elsie Manson was elected president; Virginia Lewis, vice-president; Irene Lyke, secretary; and Annie Wessel, treasurer.

Saline Historical Society—meets 8 p.m. third Tuesday of month at Saline High School library.

Ypsilanti Historical Society—Exhibit of Indian crafts made by Joyce Tinkham of Maybee, a half-blood member of the Nishga tribe of salmon fishermen of British Columbia, Canada, at museum, which is open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 2-4 p.m.

Roast beef dinner 5:30 p.m. Sunday, October 21, at St. John's Catholic Church. Speakers will be Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hagler talking about the Victorian house they moved and renovated on Berry Road off Ford Road. He is president of the Detroit Historical Society. She is curator of furniture at Greenfield Village. Tickets are $4. Advance reservations required at least a week ahead, by calling museum, HU2-4990.

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GIRL SCOUTS HELP AT TOUR, ART FAIR

Girl Scouts of Newport School Troops 600 and 696 helped WCHS at Barton Powerhouse June 9 and with selling pop at the Art Fair booth.

June 9 helpers were Heather Ferguson, Kasey McLeroy, Nicole Merke, Linnea Nooden, Michelle Sampson, Sarah Schaefer, Whitney Tannen, and mothers, Mrs. Sarah Nooden and Mrs. Anna Marie Schaefer.

Helping at the Art Fair were Kelli Christman, Heather Ferguson, Carrie Fisher, Nicole Merke, Alexis Nicely, Michelle Sampson, Sarah Schaefer, Whitney and Beth Tannen and Angela Zahn. Mothers assisting were Mrs. Fisher, Mrs. Merke, Mrs. Schaefer, Mrs. Tannen and Mrs. Zahn.

GSWC ELECTS OFFICERS

Phyllis Jones is president of the Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County, with Leigh Anderson vice-president. Carole Callard is secretary and Flora Burt of Chelsea, treasurer. Kenneth Coe of Ypsilanti is librarian.

Directors are Judy Punnett of Ypsilanti, Gary Casasdy of Pinckney, Lydia Muncy of Ann Arbor and Harold Jones of Chelsea.

Alloa Anderson will speak on "Hereditary Societies" at the meeting Sunday, September 23, at 2:30 p.m. at Washtenaw Community College. A help session is planned at 1 p.m.

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING
8:00 p.m. THURSDAY
SEPTEMBER 27, 1979
Liberty Hall
Great Lakes Federal Savings
Liberty at Division
Ann Arbor, Michigan

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